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STORIES

OF

RAGGED SCHOOLS,

AND

RAGGED SCHOLARS.

REVISED BY DANIEL P. KIDDER

New-York :

PUBLISHED BY LANE & SCOTT,

**FOR THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL
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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THIS book was written and first printed in London. In Great Britain only are ragged schools known, as such.

There are many ragged children in the United States of America; but it is a cause of thankfulness that their number is not great in proportion to that of the children who have good clothing, together with food and other blessings in abundance.

We hope that the favored and happy children of our country will remember who hath caused them to differ from the poor ragged children of England, about whom they will read in this book.

Readers should also be reminded of the excellence of the Sabbath-school institution in being capable of doing good in the midst of so much evil.

We desire that the characters of the good and self-denying men who have established and sustained ragged schools should be admired and imitated.

In order that our readers may have a better knowledge of the enterprise of ragged-school instruction, we have considerably enlarged the original dimensions of this volume, by adding matter from other reliable sources.

New-York, 1850.

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RAGGED SCHOOLS AND RAGGED SCHOLARS.

CHAPTER I.

SUNDAY-SCHOOLS — THOMAS CRANFIELD — JOHN
POUNDS—THE CITY MISSION—RAGGED SCHOOLS.

I HAVE some true stories to tell of children who went to a ragged school: but I wish to tell these stories in my own way; and I must first write about other persons and things.

It was a good day when Sunday-schools were first thought of. Since then, large numbers of children, who else would have grown up ignorant

of God, have been taught to read his holy word; and many have believed and obeyed the gospel, and been saved from the wrath to come.

Yet it should be known that though there are, in our country, so many Sunday-schools, there are also tens of thousands of poor children who are in danger of growing up to be as ignorant, as wretched, and as wicked as heathens. How can this be?

Ah, young reader, if you were to pass through some parts of London, and other large towns, you would soon understand this. You would see multitudes of men, and women, and children, living in narrow lanes and close courts, amidst filth which it is painful to witness, and in the practice of sin which it is shocking to think of. The houses in which

they dwell are mostly very old ; and in them the people are crowded together, without any of the comforts of life. In a single room are often two or three families ; and in many of the houses may sometimes be seen fifty or sixty persons who have no home besides these miserable places. When they rest at night, they lie huddled together on rags and straw ; and they pass most of their days in drunkenness, gambling, quarreling, and almost every kind of wickedness.

Do you ask how such people obtain a living ? Indeed it would be hard to say. It is to be feared that most of them are thieves, and bring up their children to be thieves also. Many are beggars, ballad-singers, and fortune-tellers, as they call

themselves. Some are coiners of base money, which they sell to others as sinful as themselves, to pass for good money. Very few indeed of them are really honest and industrious; for we may be sure that honest and industrious persons, though poor, would not willingly live where there is so much dirt, discomfort, and roguery.

Now you may suppose that the children who are brought up amidst such scenes are sadly neglected, and greatly to be pitied. They are early taught to curse and swear, and lie and steal; but they are kept in ignorance of all that is good. They know nothing of the Bible; they pay no regard to the Sabbath; they feel no shame in being known as dishonest: if found out, and sent to prison

for stealing, as hundreds of them are every year, they only become more hardened, and boast of their crimes. Poor children! it is not uncommon for them to be driven from their wretched homes by their cruel parents, to obtain their daily bread by dishonesty; and they are punished when they return, if they have not stolen enough.

It is sad even to see these children as they roam the streets, they are generally so ragged and filthy; and it is distressing to hear them speak, their language is so indecent and profane:—they are altogether like little savages, such as we might expect to find in heathen lands; but who are a disgrace to a country which is called Christian. It is plain that such children as these are not

often to be found in Sunday-schools.

And yet, ignorant and vicious as they are, they have souls, you know, as well as others—souls that must either be saved or lost! They have minds capable of receiving instruction, and of being turned from the love and practice of sin to usefulness and holiness.

I am happy to say that, at different times, and in different ways, the gospel has been made known to some of these poor children and their parents, and that not a few have been brought out of the darkness of vice and misery. There once lived a good man, whose name was Thomas Cranfield, who delighted in this holy employment. He lived in London, and was grieved to see around

him so many going in the broad road to destruction. He was not a rich and great man; but he had to work hard for the support of his family: yet this did not prevent him from trying to be useful to others. Among many other plans which the dear Saviour whom he loved put into his heart to undertake, was that of Sunday-schools for the very worst and the most neglected children he could find.

There was one part of London with which Cranfield became acquainted, which was inhabited by just such people as I have spoken of. Thieves, beggars, gipsies, and poor, degraded, sinful women, were to be met with in almost every house. In the same room were often found living together, men,

women, children, pigs, dogs, and even asses; while in every part of the wretched place were to be heard most awful blasphemies. The poor children were in a sad condition. Many of them had scarcely enough rags to cover them; and their matted hair and dirty faces and hands proved that they were very seldom either combed or washed.

It was in this place that Thomas Cranfield determined to have a Sunday-school. He hired a room, and made it known that he was willing to teach any children who would come to him. Many children went to this school; and though at first they were very rude, and the kind teacher was greatly persecuted by the wicked people

of the place, much good was done. The children, after awhile, became more teachable, more cleanly, and more modest, and, what is still better, some of them learned the way of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ, and lived and died in the faith of the gospel. Other persons too, besides children, were converted and made holy, by the blessing of God upon the teaching of Thomas Cranfield; so that he had great reason to be thankful that it had been put into his mind to visit and teach such ragged, dirty, and vicious children.

Thomas Cranfield and his friends afterwards opened Sunday-schools in other parts of London, which were crowded with poor, ignorant, and very degraded scholars;

and the success which attended their labours showed that there is a lovely power in the gospel, accompanied by the grace of the Holy Spirit, to soften the hardest heart, and to bring the most daring rebel to obey the Saviour.

“ This remedy did wisdom find
To heal diseases of the mind ;
This sovereign balm, whose virtues can
Restore the ruin'd creature, man.

“ Where Satan reign'd in shades of night
The gospel strikes a heavenly light ;
Our lusts its wondrous power controls,
And calms the rage of angry souls.

“ Lions and beasts of savage name
Put on the nature of the lamb ;
Whilst the wide world esteem it strange,
Gaze, and admire, and hate the change.”

While Thomas Cranfield, and others like him, whose hearts God had touched to pity and try to save poor

little heathens at home, were thus employed in London, the same kind of work was being done and carried on elsewhere. And before we come to our ragged-school children, I must tell you a little about a poor man who lived at Portsmouth. The name of this poor man was John Pounds. By trade he was a cobbler, or a mender of shoes; and he lived in a small wooden house in one of the mean streets of that large town. John Pounds was a cripple, and had nothing to depend upon but his own hard labor; yet he was very cheerful and very kind. He was fond of animals, which he reared in his little shop, where he might often be seen hard at work, with a canary bird on one shoulder and a cat on the other: for he had quite "a happy family" around him.

But John Pounds did not bestow all his affection upon beasts and birds. He was very partial to children. He had a little nephew, who, like himself, was a cripple, whom he took great care of, and in every way treated with much kindness.

When this little boy was old enough to begin learning to read, his kind uncle undertook to teach him; and thinking that he might as well have two scholars as one, and that perhaps a companion would be helpful and pleasant to his nephew, John Pounds invited the child of a very poor woman, who lived near, to come to his shop, and learn his letters. Then he got another and another to come, until, after a time, he had around him every day a school of thirty or forty poor, dirty,

ragged children, who, but for kind John Pounds, would never have gone to any school, but must have grown up ignorant, and, most likely, very wicked.

John Pounds was not paid for teaching these ragged, neglected children, except by the pleasure he took in the work. Indeed, it cost him something sometimes to get a scholar; for he more than once followed a little, unwilling, hungry fellow down the street, and tempted him to return with him to his school, by the promise of food. And so this poor, but useful man went on, working hard at his trade and teaching his scholars, both boys and girls, in the small shed which served him for a shop. And he was happier than many rich men who know not what

to do with their time or their money. He had found out the secret of true pleasure,—he was doing good. His pupils were happy too; for John Pounds had such kind and merry ways of teaching them, that they quite enjoyed being at his school. He might have had many more scholars; but his workshop was always well filled. When he had room for more, he made it a practice to choose the worst and the poorest children he could find, in hopes of doing the most good; and it was really extraordinary how he gained their affections, and got them to mind what he said.

John Pounds took pains to teach other things than mere spelling and reading. He brought his ragged, and ignorant, and vicious scholars to un-

derstand the value of honesty and industry. He taught them to do much for themselves which would be helpful to them as they grew older. Besides this, when they were sick, he kindly nursed them; and when they were not at their books, he played with them. This kind treatment, which the poor children were not used to receive at their miserable homes, softened their hearts; and many whom he thus, through several years, generously cared for and taught, grew up to be sober, honest, and industrious, when, but for his help, and the blessing of God upon it, they would have been all their lives ignorant and wicked, and very likely have come to a sad and shameful end.

Poor John Pounds died in the be-

ginning of the year 1839. He was then an old man; but he had kept on his school almost to the last day of his life, for he died suddenly. The poor children wept and grieved when their kind instructor was gone. And well they might, for though there were thousands of people in that large town who were much richer in money than the old cobbler, there was not one to whom these children could look with such confidence and love as to their humble but generous benefactor.

Well, John Pounds was dead, and Thomas Cranfield died about a year before him; but before this time, many other persons had taken an interest in the instruction and welfare of the neglected children of such ignorant and wicked parents

as you have here been reading about—yes, and of those parents too. In the year 1835, some good, zealous Christians met together to think of what could be done for the benefit of great numbers of the people who were living like heathens and savages, though in Christian Britain. They plainly saw that churches and chapels were useless to those who would not enter them; and that none of the means then made use of for spreading abroad the knowledge of God and his word, were just those that were needed for the conversion of such heathens at home. They remembered that it is asked in the Bible, “How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and

how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?" Rom. x, 14, 15. And they believed that the blessing of God would rest upon their prayers and labors if they were to send preachers, or missionaries, or Scripture readers, to these dark and dreary parts of large cities, to talk to the people in their own houses, and to read to them the word of God. They therefore formed a society, which is called "The City Mission," for this very purpose; and you will be pleased to be told that nearly two hundred pious missionaries are employed in London and its neighborhood alone, in visiting from house to house, and making known the gospel to nearly half a million of people, most of whom, it is to be

feared, were what the Bible calls "ignorant" and "out of the way," Heb. v, 2. There are also many Scripture readers, district visitors, and tract distributors engaged in the same good work. There is not room here to tell you how much these good men have had to endure of persecution and suffering in their holy employment; nor how much pleasure they have had in seeing poor, guilty, hardened sinners become penitent, and in hearing them ask, "What must we do to be saved?" Many delightful histories might be told of such persons, and the good done through the mighty power and grace of Christ. We must pass on, however, to other matters.

While something has been done to save the souls of parents and

grown-up people in these miserably wicked and filthy parts of London, the children have not been forgotten. Sunday-schools and evening schools have been opened, to which the dirtiest and most neglected and depraved children are invited. They go to these schools notwithstanding their rags and filth, and with all the open, boastful sinfulness which from day to day they learn from those about them. Little cunning beggar-boys and girls—young thieves—children who could not be suffered to mix for an hour with the children of honest, industrious, sober, decent parents—these are the kind of scholars who, for the most part, attend the schools called ragged schools. I am sure it is not needful to say why they are called by this name.

It is pleasant to think that, in this way, many hundreds of children are taught in these ragged schools what perhaps they would never have learned anywhere else,—the value of a good character, the duty of honesty, sobriety, and industry, the advantage of knowledge, and, above all, the way of pardon, peace, and eternal safety, through the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER II.

A RAGGED SCHOOL IN WESTMINSTER—SCHOOL OF
INDUSTRY FOR POOR CHILDREN.

YOU have heard of Westminster, have you not? It is a city in itself, though it forms now a part of London. At one time London and Westminster were a mile or two apart, and between them were fields; but this was a great while ago. A long street, called the Strand, has taken the place of what was a pleasant country road; and on each side are other streets which cover the ground once divided by hedge-rows into green meadows.

There are many fine large buildings in Westminster. There are Westminster Abbey, and Westminster Hall, the Queen's Palace, and

the Houses of Parliament, besides very many large and stately houses belonging to the nobility of the country, and whole streets of large shops filled with rich goods of almost all kinds. In Westminster, too, are beautiful parks and grand squares; and scarcely any luxury is wanting in this city that money can purchase, for there is no city in England in which so many of the rich and the great live.

But other scenes may be witnessed in Westminster; for in no city in England can be found greater poverty, wretchedness, and vice. Behind the spacious streets, and around the noble buildings, are lanes, and rows, and courts, where dwell hundreds and hundreds of miserable creatures, in fearful igno-

rance and open sin, without God, without hope in the world, and without shame. It is not poverty, dear young reader, that makes any person either despicable or really pitiable. O no! there are many very poor people in the world, who are "rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him," James ii, 5. But often, sin first causes poverty, and then poverty leads to fresh crime. When this is the case with a single person or family, living apart from others, it is very sad: but when almost a whole street or neighborhood is filled with crowds of the poor, the profane, and the hardened, who care neither for the laws of God nor of man—think how dreadful must be its condition!

It was in such a neighborhood as this, in the city of Westminster, that a kind missionary was sent to teach the ignorant and reclaim the wicked ; and his labors were made useful to many. But he well knew that if the young continued to be neglected, there could be but little hope of lasting improvement. For this reason, though his time was much taken up in visiting the parents in their miserable apartments, reading to them the Scriptures, and talking to them about the great truths of the gospel, he determined to attempt the instruction of the children also, and to gain their attention, respect, and love. So he hired a room, and made known that he would, every Sunday afternoon, teach any children who would come to him.

On the first day, more than forty ragged boys and girls came to the room. Very likely many of them went only to make sport of the kind missionary; and perhaps few of them had any real desire to learn what was good. It was well, however, that they were willing to put themselves in the way of instruction.

It was mournful, as these poor children flocked to the room until it was well filled, to observe their neglected condition. Some seemed to be half starved; others were suffering from disease, their faces care-worn and sorrowful. Many had scarcely any garments to cover their shivering bodies; and few of them had on anything better than filthy rags. Their skin was almost hidden by dirt, and the hair of their heads was

matted together through neglect. It was more mournful still to see and hear how ignorant and wicked they were. They could not read; they knew nothing of God, of his word, and his salvation. They had never been taught to lift their hearts and voices to their Maker and Redeemer in praise and prayer. Their language was full of cursing; and their manners were rough and rude. It needed great patience, and great love too, to begin the work of teaching such children as these; and much perseverance for carrying it on.

After a time, so many children came to be taught, that it was needful to have a larger place for teaching. The teacher wished also to have his ragged scholars on week-days, as well as on Sundays. An

old stable was therefore obtained, which, when repaired and fitted up, made a good school-room; and the children were permitted to come every evening for instruction. And they were not taught in vain. You will read, in the next chapter, of a few children who learned there what they would never have been taught at home, or in the streets and lanes of London; and many more were rescued from wretchedness and ruin.

As year after year passed away, it was seen how great a blessing the ragged school had been made to the neighborhood. The scholars increased in number, and began to look more cleanly and neat, though still in poverty and rags. They became, too, more decent in their behavior, and more honest in their

conduct. Formerly, hundreds of children were to be seen in the streets, employing their hands in mischief, and their tongues in swearing, and taking the name of God in vain. Now, they might often be found in harmless groups, singing the hymns which they had learned at the ragged school.

At the end of ten years, many hundreds of poor children had thus been cared for; and great numbers of them had gone into situations, had behaved well, and become good and useful members of society, when but for the ragged school they would, almost certainly, have been rogues and vagabonds. O yes, and many, too, had in those ten years listened, with glistening eyes and full hearts, to the story of Christ's love to poor

sinner; and given themselves to him as his willing servants forever. Surely, then, ragged schools are good things, and worth reading about.

Well, at the end of ten years, three hundred children were receiving daily instruction in this school; and though it was yet a ragged school, and the children were ragged children, it was a different sight from what it at first had been; it was now a pleasure to observe how eager the children were to learn, and what a great improvement had taken place in their behavior.

It was a great grief to all who were interested in the Westminster ragged school, that the poor children who were taught there had no happy homes, but were in great danger of forgetting what they had learned that

was good, and of being drawn into the same course of wickedness which had brought ruin and misery to all around them. They knew, too, that many of the poor children had really no homes, but were orphans, without friends to care for them, or those whose parents were likely quite to desert them. Some of the children had parents who had been sent out of the country for breaking the laws. It was, therefore, sad to think what would become of the children as they grew older. In order to save such as these from temptation, and destruction of body and soul, a refuge was provided for fifty boys and fifty girls, where they are trained for respectable service, for being useful in the world, instead of injurious, and for eternal happiness in the world to

come, instead of everlasting woe and misery.

In this house of refuge, which is also a school of industry, the children are stripped of their old rags, and neatly clothed in garments which they are taught to make for themselves. They are made every day to wash in a large bath; so that they are always clean, and cleanliness promotes good health. They have sufficient plain food given to them; and they are, every day, taken to walk in the park, which is near; and this also is good, both for the body and the mind. Then, one part of the day they receive instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic; and at another part of it they are taught useful trades, to prepare them for a life of honest industry. Besides all this, the children's

souls are cared for. The great and glorious truths of the Bible are made known and explained to them; and they learn that "the grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Titus ii, 11-14.

When we think of what these poor children would have been, had no one cared for their souls; how much evil they might have done;

how much misery they would have suffered,—we may well rejoice that so much has been done for them. We may also be glad that many such plans are now going on, which, with the blessing of God, will do more good than can well be imagined. Would it not be better, young reader, that the very neglected, ignorant, and depraved children of every town should receive good instruction and training, than that they should go on from bad to worse, doing mischief to all around them, be punished again and again by being sent to prison, and at last end their days in disgrace and sorrow, without hope of a better world?

CHAPTER III.

RAGGED-SCHOOL CHILDREN—THE BENEFITS THEY RECEIVED AND IMPARTED.

HENRY THE MATCH-SELLER.

A LITTLE boy, whom we will call Henry, had been for some time a scholar in the ragged school. He had a sad, wretched home. His parents were drunkards; almost all the money they could obtain was spent upon themselves in the gin-shop; and their poor children had scarcely even rags to cover them, and often were obliged to pass a whole day without food. It is terrible to think how much those children must have suffered, and how cruelly they had been driven to sly pilfering, or daring thievery, by the wicked neglect of their besotted father and mother.

When Henry was admitted into the school, one of his brothers had been transported as a thief, and another, younger than himself, was in prison for having stolen to keep himself from starvation.

I have said that Henry's home was a wretched one; let me describe it:—There was but one room for the whole family, which had to serve as a sleeping-room at night, as well as a living-room by day. In one corner of the dirty, unswept floor, was a scanty heap of shavings for a bed, upon which they all huddled themselves together for rest, without blanket, rug, or even rags to cover them from the cold air. On the mantel-shelf were two cups; and by the fire-grate, in which was seldom to be seen a handful of burning

coals, was an old tin kettle, without a lid. Chairs there were none, nor a table, nor cupboard for food. Alas! seldom would such a convenience have been of use, for even a day's supply of dry bread alone was seldom there.

Sin caused this want. Sometimes the Almighty sees fit, in his providence, to afflict the industrious, and sober, and godly with deep poverty. Sickness may bring them low; or inability to obtain employment may reduce them to great distress; or dearness of provisions may, at times, severely try their patience and their faith. But in any such case, those whom God has blessed with plenty, may pity without blaming the sufferers, and relieve without fear of causing sin to be added to sin. And when the

children of God are thus stricken with poverty, they know that their heavenly Father is still watching over and caring for them; and that he will not lay upon them more than he will give strength to bear, if they seek his help. They know, too, that "all things work together for good to them that love God," and that the "light affliction" of the Christian, "which is but for a moment," is made to work for him "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," Rom. viii, 28; 2 Cor. iv, 17. But there was no such consolation and hope for the parents of little Henry. They brought upon themselves and their children all the sufferings they endured from hunger, cold, nakedness, and abject want.

Though Henry had such a home, and such depraved parents, he was far from being a dull, stupid, obstinate, discontented, or badly disposed child. He seemed to have been preserved, in a great measure, from the contagion of wickedness by which he was surrounded; and after he had been a little time at the ragged school, none of his school-fellows were more cheerful, diligent, and well-behaved; while, out of school, he was the delight of his playmates, on account of his good-tempered and happy disposition. It would have been a sad thing if such a boy had been driven by want and cruelty to the commission of crime. Surely it was the sovereign mercy of God that led him to the ragged school, and there provided him with

friends who were better to him than his own neglectful parents.

It was a pleasure to see little Henry enter the school every day with a cheerful step, and clean face and hands. It was a good trait of his character that he cared at all about cleanliness; for we may be sure he did not learn it of a mother who cared for little else besides her own wicked indulgence, and who was far more fond of the gin-shop than of her own room. Indeed, it was not without some trouble that Henry could keep himself clean; for he had neither soap, towel, nor bowl to use. But where there is a will, there is generally a way; and after rising from his bed of shavings, the boy used to take an old rag into the back yard of the house, and well wash

himself with water from a cask which stood in the corner. After all, however, poor Henry was a pitiable object. His clothes were deplorably old and ragged, and he had neither shoes nor stockings to his feet.

Henry's cheerfulness and perseverance gained the good-will of his teachers, who gave him, as a reward for his conduct, a pair of shoes and stockings—the first he ever remembered to have had. It was very cold weather; the snow lay thick on the ground; and the poor boy was overjoyed with the present. The next day, however, he came to school barefoot as usual, carrying the shoes and stockings in his hand. "How is this?" said his teacher. "O, sir," he replied, "you see my

feet are all over chilblains; I could not bear the shoes on, they hurt me so much. But I would not leave them at home; for if I had, I should not have seen them again. My mother would part with them to get money for drink. You know, sir, my mother would have drunk me before now if she could."

The teacher knew this to be true; and all he could do, at that time, was to pity him and pray for him, and give him good advice.

Amidst such discouragements, which would have broken down the spirits of many a stout man, Henry still continued his diligent attention to learning. No one knew, perhaps his teacher could only guess, how often he entered the school faint with hunger from the neglect of his



HENRY SELLING MATCHES.

unnatural parents, and how much ill usage besides he had to bear from them in their drunken anger. At last, the poor little fellow ventured to ask his teacher if he would lend him threepence.

“And what would you do with the money, Henry?” The boy replied that he wished to earn his own living; and he thought if he had threepence to begin with he could do it, and attend school too. He should be sorry, he said, to do as his poor brothers had done; and he wished to get his living honestly.

The threepence was lent to him; and with this small sum, the honest, enterprising, and industrious boy began to trade directly. He bought a dozen boxes of lucifer matches, and offered them for sale. Ah, little did

the passers by, to whom Henry offered his trifling merchandise, know what mighty struggles between hope and fear were going on in the mind of the ardent lad! Little did they who listened favorably to his entreaties, and laid out a penny toward diminishing his stock of goods, think how beneficially they employed that money, and how they were furthering the kind designs of His providence without whose permission not even a sparrow falls to the ground, who clothes the fields with verdure, and takes care of all who trust in him.

The matches were sold, and Henry had gained threepence by his adventure. Hungry as he was, he did not waste it in luxuries; he bought more matches, and continued

his trade. From time to time he sold a fresh dozen of boxes, and with the profit he made by them he got food for his support, and was sometimes enabled to feed a poor hungry sister, who also went to the ragged school, and who suffered equally with himself from the neglect and ill treatment of their parents.

For nearly two years did Henry support himself, all the while regularly attending the school, and yet disposing of his matches. "You know," he said, when asked how he contrived to live, "I can always manage to make threepence, and sometimes more. I spend one penny for breakfast, another for dinner, and the same sum for supper: that is better than my brothers did; and

by and by, when I can read and write well, I will get a situation."

Young reader, think of Henry and his first threepence, and his penny-worths of bread for breakfast, dinner, and supper, when you are tempted to spend pence on luxuries. Think, and be thankful for your mercies, and at the same time ask yourself, "Can I not make a better use of this money?"

After a time, Henry could read and write well, and he left off match-selling to seek a situation. During the time he had been at the ragged school, though surrounded by bad examples, and perhaps often tempted to steal, he had maintained the same character for honesty which first induced his teacher to lend him the threepence. This character was

now of service to him; and his perseverance overcame many difficulties which lay in his path. He became the errand-boy of a fish-monger.

Years passed away, and the little match-selling boy became a young man. His home was no longer in a miserable, unfurnished, dirty room, but in a comfortable, well-furnished house. His ragged clothing had long ago given place to the respectable garb of a young tradesman. His character had become still further improved. By the grace of God he had been kept from the sins which, practiced by his parents, had embittered the days of his childhood, and brought guilt, sorrow, and ruin into his family. As he advanced in age and knowledge, he became more

and more useful to his employer, who treated him with respect, advanced his wages, and made him his confidential servant.

“The wages of sin is death.” Henry’s mother died a victim to intemperance; and for a time the widowed husband seemed roused by this event from his course of dissipation. It was but for a time, however. Like “the dog to his vomit,” and “the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire,” 2 Pet. ii, 22; so the unhappy man returned to his habits of self-indulgence and drunkenness, and cruelly turned his only daughter into the streets.

It was well for this poor girl that she had received good instruction in a ragged school, and that those instructions had been kept and fol-

lowed, as well as received. It was well, also, that she had a friend in her brother Henry. It was not likely that he who, when a ragged-school boy, had often shared his penny breakfast or dinner with his hungry sister, would suffer her to perish when God had blessed him with prosperity. No; he received the poor outcast with affection, and paid for her lodgings until she obtained the means for her own support, which, by honest industry, she was soon enabled to do. From that time, the brother and sister might be seen every Sunday walking together to the house of God, with thankful hearts that they had been rescued from the depth of wretchedness and vice, placed in worldly comfort, and taught the way

of everlasting life, by the instrumentality of a ragged school.

HAPPY JAMES: OR, THE DEATH-BED OF
A RAGGED-SCHOOL BOY.

IN the corner of a room, such a one as we described as the home of little Henry, and lying on a bundle of straw, was a poor child who had been for some time at the ragged school. His school days, however, were over. Nakedness and neglect had been too much for his tender frame; a bad cough had settled on his lungs; he had become weaker and weaker, till no hope was left that his life would much longer be continued. Happy boy! he had heard, at the ragged school, of the love and power of the compassionate

Saviour; he had given himself to him; and he was not afraid to die.

His teacher called to see him. Everything about him was truly miserable. His mother, like the mother of the young match-seller, was ignorant and wicked, addicted to drunkenness, and careless of her family. His father was also a sadly profligate man. Had these parents been mindful of their duty to God, to their children, and to themselves, their circumstances might have been far different; so true is it that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," 1 Tim. iv, 8. But they cared about little besides the indulgence of their own sinful inclinations. No wonder, then, that they were wretched; that

the mother was ragged and dirty, and the poor dying boy's worldly comforts very few.

He was very glad to see his teacher. He said that he felt himself to be dying; but he was happy, for he was going to Jesus. He asked to have the Bible once more read to him, that he might hear about the Saviour.

He had a brother and sister who knew nothing of the pleasures of youthful piety—who were ignorant of God and his word. He called them to him, and begged of them to go to the school which had been made such a blessing to himself, and where they would learn about Christ, and the way to heaven. He earnestly implored them to pray for a new heart, which is the gift of

God's Holy Spirit, through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The father and mother of the dying boy were standing by. Their hearts were touched: for they seemed to be hearing his voice almost for the last time; and it must indeed be a hard-hearted parent, who can look on the death-bed of a child without feeling. The little fellow turned his eyes toward them with strong affection.—“Mother,” he said, and his voice was very weak and broken; yet how great was its power to awaken the mother's sleeping conscience!—“Mother, will you give up drinking, and go to the house of God, and pray for a new heart? Mother, I want to meet you in heaven.”

After a little while, he again turned to his parents,—

“Father, I shall soon leave you, but I am going to my heavenly Father. Will you give up swearing, father; and read the Bible, and go to a place of worship on Sunday, and seek a new heart? Then I shall meet you in heaven. Do, father.”

Ah! what a scene that was—a dying child exhorting his careless parents to prepare for following him, and for meeting him in heaven! The father could not answer the child; but stood wiping away the falling tears with the sleeve of his tattered jacket. The mother’s heart, too, was full of grief; but with sobs and tears she promised for herself and her husband that they would attend to their dying son’s request.

There lay in the next room a little

girl who had been the school companion of poor James—that was the name of the dying boy. She also was very ill. He wished to see her once more; and asked his mother to carry him to her. This was done, and he affectionately bade her farewell.

When he was brought back to his bed of straw, he bethought himself of a message to send to his grandmother, who had been kind to him, but who was not then present.

“Tell grandmother,” he said to his teacher, “to give up buying things on Sunday, and to read the big Testament you gave her.”

In a few short hours, the soul of little James had left its frail body, which was soon afterward placed in the grave: but his dying requests

were not forgotten. From that time the conduct of his parents became greatly altered ; and it may be hoped that, though young when called away from earth, the ragged-school boy had not lived in vain.

“ Happy the children who are gone
To live with Jesus Christ in peace ;
Who stand around his glorious throne,
Redeem'd by blood, and saved by grace !

“ The Saviour whom they loved below,
Hath kindly wiped their tears away ;
No sin, no sorrow, there they know,
But dwell in one eternal day.”

WE ARE ALL WRONG.

ONE day a little boy came to the ragged school, to have his name put down as a scholar. His dress was a very old coat, which had been made, most likely, many years before, for a man ; and now, when worn by the





boy, its skirts dragged along the ground as he walked. He had no shirt, no shoes, no stockings; and instead of trowsers, an old dirty apron was tied round him, outside the coat. The poor little fellow was covered with dirt from head to foot, plainly showing that his home was one of great neglect and discomfort, as well as of poverty.

The parents of this poor boy were not generally reckoned dishonest people; but they were well known as being very careless about their family, and very profligate. Their occupation was that of selling vegetables and fruit in the streets; and they might have obtained a comfortable living in this way, but for their sad habits of drunkenness. As it was, almost all they earned, they

spent at the public-house, leaving their children to wander in the streets, and to obtain food for themselves as they could.

You may think what a wretched home they had. A few shavings served for a bed; an old basket, turned bottom upwards, was the only table, and two old saucepans were the only seats that the room contained. The parents themselves were always dressed in tatters, and covered with filth; and the neighbors around them—though, alas! many of them were very ignorant and debased—looked upon this family with pity and contempt.

It was hard work, no doubt, to make the son of such parents pay any regard to cleanliness, and to take any real pleasure in learning.

After a time, however, he was more decent in appearance, and, in a few months, was able to read. His teacher then gave him, as a reward and an encouragement, a New Testament; and he was told to take it home, and to read it to his parents, if they would like to listen to him. He was to read to them the third chapter of John.

The boy had soon an opportunity of doing this; for, degraded as his parents were, they were proud of the success of their son, and pleased with the gift he had brought from school. They sat and listened, and the child read:—

“There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi,

we know that thou art a teacher come from God ; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Neither the father nor mother of the boy could read ; and most likely they had never before heard this chapter read to them. If they had, they certainly had not listened to it as they did at this time ; for, as soon as the boy had read the third verse, his father stopped him, and cried out, "You are surely reading wrong. 'Except a man be born again!'—you must have read it wrong." The little reader was sure that those were the very words ; but this did not sat-

isfy the father, who said that the teacher must come to tell him whether or not his son was right.

The teacher was glad to go to that miserable abode on such an errand; and when he got there, he took the Testament, and, beginning to read at the same place, soon came to the words, "Except a man be born again."

Well, this was just the same as his son had read; and the man could no longer doubt that the exact words were in the book; but this only increased his difficulty. "How *can* a man be born again?" he asked.

The teacher then told him that the new birth spoken of there meant a changed heart; that a person who had passed through such a change would no longer live for his own

sinful pleasures, but for the glory of God. He said that, instead of the love of sin, new desires and affections would spring up in the heart; that there would be a love of holiness, and a constant fear to do what is forbidden by God. He said, also, that this change of heart and affection would produce a change of conduct; that the man thus changed would forsake the sins which he had before loved, and become sober, honest, industrious, and frugal, and also in all things would adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour. He told him, lastly, that such a change could only be wrought by the Holy Spirit of God, through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ, and on account of what he had done and suffered.

These words made a great impression on the mind of this poor sinful and ignorant man. He exclaimed, "We are all wrong!" The truth of the gospel had touched his heart with power; and caused him to feel what a wretch he had lived through the whole of his life.

He looked around him, and saw everything to convince him that his own sins had brought him to ruin and desolation even in this world; and he felt that they were hurrying him on to eternal destruction. Like the jailer whom we read of in the Acts of the Apostles, his thought was, "What must I do?" No doubt, after this, he was shown the way of salvation more clearly; and his conduct gave great hope that he knew by experience what it was to be

born again. After several years, it was found that the sins he had once loved and followed had been forsaken; and that the word of God was the rule of his life. His wife, too, became an altered woman; no longer neglectful of her children, and caring for nothing but her own sinful gratification, but desirous of learning the will of her Maker and Saviour, and of doing it.

You may be sure that such a change as this made a difference in many other respects. The money that they earned, and which once would have been squandered in sin, was employed in making home decent and happy. The children, as well as themselves, were comfortably clothed and fed; by degrees, their abode was furnished with table and

chairs, bed and bedstead; while cleanliness gave additional value to every new comfort they enjoyed. They were no longer "all wrong;" but had reason to hope, and others had reason to hope for them, that the gospel, which had brought such a change to their dwelling, had also been the power of God unto salvation, because it was believed and obeyed. Do you not think, then, that these persons were proof of God's mercy; and that they had great reason to be thankful for the instructions received by their son at the ragged school?

CHAPTER IV.

RAGGED-SCHOOL MEMORIALS—THE OLD STABLE.

ORGANIZATION OF THE SCHOOL.—DEATH
OF JAMES S.

It is upwards of ten years since we first visited the back streets and courts which lie immediately behind Westminster Abbey. Our object was to make known the message of God's mercy and love to the degraded inhabitants of that neighborhood. After taking a survey of the old brick buildings, some of which seemed nodding to their fall, we entered the wretched dwellings. This, however, required no small degree of moral courage. While passing from house to house, and room to room, we found everything in keeping with

windows long since broken, and street-doors wrenched from their hinges. The filthy, dilapidated dwellings sadly harmonized with the ruffianly and besotted aspect of the inhabitants, among whom employment too frequently means crime, and amusement—debauchery and outrage. No one could go within the precincts of such a place, without perceiving that he had entered into a colony of thieves and pickpockets. Under the shadow of St. Stephens, the seat of British *Legislation*, were these masses of the human family to be found, who knew no religion, and literally owned no laws. At the doors and windows of the houses, and also at the ends of narrow courts, were seen loitering groups of half-dressed men and women, smoking,

swearing, and occasionally fighting. The swarms of filthy, neglected children, squatted in the mud, were screaming forth language as profane and obscene as that of their elders. These were being trained, as their fathers and mothers had been before them, in that system of education of which Newgate and Botany Bay are the almost inevitable results.

One fine Sabbath afternoon, in the month of April, when the streets were unusually crowded, after having provided a large room, we went forth in company with a poor tinker, (the only person in the neighborhood who would render us any assistance,) to gather together these poor neglected and outcast children of the streets.

After no small effort, forty were

taken to the room, all of whom looked as wild as the deer taken from the mountain, and penned up within the hurdles, when approached by men; the matted hair, the mud-covered face, hands, and feet, the ragged and tattered clothes, that served as an apology to cover their nakedness, gave the group a very grotesque appearance, and would have been a fine subject for the painter's pencil.

Little was done that afternoon besides taking the names, and even in this we had to encounter difficulties. Beginning with the first bench, a boy was asked, "What is your name?" He answered, "They calls me Billy." "Where do you live?" "I lives in that yer street down the way, at Mother M——'s rag-shop; I have a tother brother, but I am older than

he." The next boy was ten years of age; he said his name was Dick. "Any other name besides Dick?" "No, they calls me Dick; I sells matches in the streets, and live in that tother street next room to Jimmy that sells oranges." Such is a specimen of the answers given to questions respecting names, age, and residence!

Some interesting stories were told them from the Scriptures, and at the close of the afternoon each child had a small card given him, containing a short prayer. Attached to it was a piece of pink tape, that it might be hung over the mantel-shelf.

This appeared to them more valuable than if it had been gold. Accompanied with the reward was an invitation to come again next Sab-

bath, which was heartily responded to by each child. Next Sabbath a large addition to our former numbers was congregated at the school-room. The work of teaching was commenced, amid difficulties only known to those who engaged in it, but by patience and perseverance they were eventually overcome. For the first time in the history of these neglected outcasts, they found out that some one loved them; they had hearts to feel it, and in return they gave their best gifts—regular attendance and orderly attention.

Though the room gave comfortable accommodation to eighty children, it soon became “too strait.” A larger one was sought; and, as a substitute for a better, an *old stable* was fitted up for the purpose.

It was soon found that the children lost much of what they gained on the Sabbath, by having no other employment or amusement but that afforded by vice and crime during the other six days of the week. To remedy this evil, when the old stable was ready, the school was opened every day. It was soon filled to overflowing, for every child was made welcome, however ragged or destitute.

The first summer's instruction had closed; dark December had arrived, with its cold nipping frosts, which told powerfully on the half-naked bodies and unshod feet of the children. Their ankles and feet were very often chapped and bleeding; yet suffering as they did, nothing would keep them from the

school. Why? Because the teacher was kind, and the hand of kindness was held out by all who met them there.

Our hearts were often grieved to witness them shivering in the cold, and especially as we could render them no assistance, for it was with great difficulty that sufficient funds were raised to carry on the school. We have seen many of the children taken ill and die, through exposure to the inclemency of the weather. Poor James S——! We shall never forget his death-bed scene. Cold settled on his lungs, which ended in rapid consumption. When we first visited him, he was lying in the corner of a cheerless room, on a pallet of dirty straw. The mother provided a chair, the only one in the room,

and it was broken. A large deal box stood in the middle of the floor, which served as a table. The mother was both dirty and ragged. James said he was dying, and that he was going to Jesus. He requested us to read the Bible to him, that he might learn more about the Saviour. The next day that we visited the little sufferer we found him much worse. He had a brother and sister, for whose welfare he showed much anxiety. He first said to his brother, "You must pray for a new heart;" and told his sister to go to school, where she would learn about Christ and the way to heaven. Then, fixing his glazed eyes upon his father and mother—for they were both in the room, looking on their dying boy, for the last time—poor James said,

with a faltering voice, "O! mother, will you give up drinking, and go to chapel, and pray for a new heart? I want to meet you in heaven; do, mother." The mother's heart was full—tears ran down her squalid cheeks. We had often made the same request to her, but our words fell upon her ears like rain-drops on the adamantine rock. But the voice that now spoke broke open the well-springs of her heart; like a voice from the grave, it came from the lips of her own boy, which were soon to be closed in death. The accusations of a guilty conscience added force to the request of the dying child, for she knew that his disease was the effect of her own neglect, through intemperate habits; and that, through his short and sharp existence, from

her he had experienced more of a parent's negligence than a mother's care.

When he had a little recovered—for he was very feeble, and could scarcely articulate—he told his father he would soon leave him, but he was going to his heavenly Father. Looking wistfully at him, he continued, “Will you give up swearing and bad words, father, and read the Bible, and go to a place of worship, and pray to God to give you a new heart, and I shall meet you in heaven?” The father could not answer the child, but stood wiping away the tears with the sleeve of his tattered flannel jacket; but the mother answered for him, and, kissing the child, she said, “He will, James—yes, he will!”

Poor little James knew that Mary, in the next room, who had been his school companion, was very ill of the same complaint. He requested his mother to carry him to see her, for the last time. On seeing the little girl, whom he kissed with much tenderness, he said that Jesus loved her, and then bade her farewell.

He was brought back, and laid on his pallet of straw, but his work was not yet done. He had a grandmother, who had treated him kindly when in health, but was not then present to hear, from his own lips, his dying counsel, but we were requested to convey to her the following message: "Tell grandmother to give up buying things on Sunday, and read the big Testament you gave her, and go to chapel."

We closed this affecting scene by offering up prayer to God in behalf of the little sufferer. In one short hour afterwards, the Saviour took home to himself this—the first ripe fruit gathered from our labors in the *Old Stable*.

THREE CHILDREN REFORMED.

BEFORE the Old Stable was opened, we were in one of the lowest lodging-houses in Westminster, sitting by the bed-side of one who had spent some years in a course of iniquity, pointing her dying eyes to Him who is ready to receive all that come unto Him that they may have life. While the silent tear was stealing down the pallid cheek of this dying, but we

trust repenting prodigal, the solemn scene was interrupted by the sudden entrance of four policemen; two of them kept the door, while the others made a strict search under all the beds that were in the room, six in number; neither the chimney nor cupboard escaped their scrutiny. Having failed in the object of their pursuit, we inquired the cause of their visit; they informed us that a man and woman, notorious for begging-letter writing, had followed up, that morning, one of these epistles with so much importunity, as to succeed in obtaining five pounds from a gentleman, under the plea of burying the applicant's wife; unfortunately, the pretended deceased wife made her appearance—she was seen by a servant of the gentleman

leaving a public-house with a bottle of rum. Information was given to the police, and they were now in close pursuit. This woman, who for years had carried on a system of imposition on the benevolent public, was a widow, and a mother of two boys, at that time of the respective ages of seven and ten years. The man with whom she lived had been a lawyer's clerk; his love of strong drink, and frequent visits to the same public-house, had brought them together; the man's former profession gave him qualifications, of which few in his position could boast, for the work of imposition; his abilities raised him to the highest dignity, for he was styled by the fraternity king of the beggars. We felt a deep solicitude in the welfare of the boys, for they

were the very objects for whom the Old Stable was opened. The worthless mother was spoken to; she admitted that education was a good thing, for *whatever* station in life one filled, it was very useful to be able to read and write. It was at once agreed that the boys should be sent to school. "However," said she, "it is but right to let you know that if Jack and myself should be sent to the 'downs'* for a month, the boys must go to the workhouse. She also made an apology for their clothes, as well she might, for the coat of the eldest boy appeared as though it had done faithful service to a man of no ordinary stature before it came into his possession. One sleeve had entirely disappeared. We hinted that

* Tothill Fields Prison.

buttons would look a little more respectable than having the coat and trowsers tied up with strings. "Bless you," she exclaimed, "you know the boys are so fond of tossing for buttons, that were I to put on wooden ones they would cut them off." They had not been long at school, before it was found necessary to use some means to secure their more regular attendance; the master complained that after all his attempts he could seldom see them in their places; he had sent after them, but to little purpose; for if he had them in the morning, he seldom saw them in the afternoon. He once locked them in the school during the dinner hour, but on his return he found they had made their escape through the roof by removing some tiles. But what

could be expected of the poor boys? they had often to provide their own food ; this they had no other means of doing than by mud-larking, that is, picking up coals by the river-side. and disposing of them for a few pence. About this time, Jack, the pretended husband of the mother, by a life of dissipation had brought on a disease, which was fast hurrying him to a premature grave. We visited him during his illness, until his death. After the death of this man, the mother of the boys commenced a new mode of living ; she opened a wardrobe of widow's weeds, for the purpose of lending them on hire for the day, to those who preferred going out on begging excursions ; she was also agent for the poor of the neighborhood, and supplied children

at ninepence a head to the professed widows, who found it would answer their purpose to take one or more children, to excite the sympathies of passers-by in the street. In this way the mother of our young friends now supported herself. We held out promises of rewards to such children as were most regular in their attendance at school, in the shape of clothing, etc. This had the desired effect of securing the attendance of these too-much neglected youths; the mother, too, was now in a profession that rendered her less liable to be sent to the "downs," or the boys being removed to the work-house; which gave them the opportunity of continuing at their classes, until they were capable of going out into the world to do something for their own sup-

port. They are now steady young men; the eldest is a plasterer, and the youngest a paper-stainer; both contribute to the support of their mother, whose habits of life are entirely changed. She told us, with much feeling, that her boys had agreed together to give her what support they could, on condition of her becoming a member of a temperance society. This she at once agreed to do, and still continues a member.

CONCLUSION.

You have now read a little about ragged schools and ragged-school children. It is only a small part of what might be written: for there are now many such schools; and every day furnishes new proofs of their need and of their usefulness. But enough has been written here to make it plain that there is much ignorance and sin, as well as poverty, even in our own land of gospel light and knowledge.

And now, young reader, we think there are two or three lessons that you may learn from this little book.

You may see what reason you have to be thankful. Do you not remember the words of David, "The lines are fallen to me in pleasant

places; yea, I have a goodly heritage?" Psa. xvi, 6. So may you say. How much fairer your lot, and greater your advantages, than if you had been brought up in ignorance of God, and of his great salvation; and had no better home than such as have here been described to you! Think who it is that has made you thus to differ, and be thankful.

Have you no reason to be humble? Do you prize your advantages quite as much as you ought to do, or profit by them quite so largely as you might do? Think of the ragged-school children, many of them with cruel, neglectful parents, surrounded with bad examples, exposed to temptation; and yet, surmounting all these things, learning with gratitude and profit, and, at length, breaking

away from bad influences, and becoming good and useful, sober and industrious. Think of this, not with conceit of your superior advantages, but with humility that they have not always been improved.

Do you remember what the Lord Jesus said about the cities where many of his mighty works had been done?—"Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you." Matt. xi, 21, 22. Now, will you ask yourself, young friend, whether or not these words apply to you? Sup-

pose, after all, you should be found among the neglecters and despisers of the blessed Saviour; do you not think that at the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for the ignorant children of whom you have read, whose ears the sounds of mercy never reached, and who perished in their sins—than for you? Lay this question, I pray you, to heart, and think upon it with deep seriousness and attention.

Then, think how mighty is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, to subdue the iniquities of men, and to save their souls. Is it not a delightful truth that Christ “is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him?” Remember, too, dear young reader, that if you would

be forever happy, it must be by the same salvation which is common to all. Except *you* repent, you must perish; and, Except *you* be born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God, Luke xiii, 3; John iii, 3.



THE RAGGED SCHOOL BOY.

L O S T.

'T WAS a night in December ; a drizzling rain
Had been dropping all day, was still dropping amain.
I pass'd by an alley : there shiver'd a child,
His clothes all in tatters, his features all wild,
His hair was bematted, his feet were unshod,
As cold and as wet as the pavement he trod.
He look'd in my face—such a look of despair !
The picture of sorrow, the victim of care.
No father, no mother, no home had the boy,
An outcast, a lost one, a stranger to joy ;
His bed was the alley, the cellar, the lane,
His pillow the door-step in cold and in rain ;
Untaught and uncared-for, unclothed and unknown,
Poor lost little fellow ! will none the child own ?

FOUND.

Yes, come to the "Ragged School," open the door,
 Look round: there 's a face we have met with before;
 'Tis the same little fellow we saw yesternight,
 His cheek is yet pale, but his young eye is bright,
 His hair is unmatted, it curls on his brow;
 His arms, do they hang down in listlessness now?
 Just watch him a moment, there's joy in his eyes,
 As his hand, all unskill'd, at such new work he tries.
 He is found—do not leave him an outcast again,
 But give him a shelter from cold and from rain;
 Instruct him, and clothe him, and feed him awhile;
 He'll pay you, o'erpay you, in gratitude's smile.
 Point, point him to Jesus, the Friend of the poor,
 And Jesus will bless both your basket and store.

THE RAGGED SCHOOL.

A SKETCH IN COURT.—BY A BARRISTER.

HARK! heard ye not that loud and startling shriek?—

From yonder gallery's crowded rows it came;—
 'Twas long—'twas fearful—and it seem'd to speak

A mother's anguish at her offspring's shame:

"Left to himself,"* to herd with folly's band,

The child *at home* was taught no useful rule,
 And no kind Christian took him by the hand,

To guide his footsteps to the "RAGGED SCHOOL."

* Proverbs xxix, 15.

Had he been there, he might have learn'd to bend
The knee in prayer—to shun the haunts of crime,
And gain the favor of that heavenly Friend
Who reigns enthroned above the spheres sublime:—
Such might have been his lot; for grace can change
The heart from folly's sway to wisdom's rule:
But some, perchance, may deem this doctrine strange,
And wondering ask,—What is a “RAGGED SCHOOL?”

Neglected youths together brought to meet,
With tatter'd garments and “unwashen hands,”
Fresh from the mud of river-bank or street,
Rude as the heathen of benighted lands—
These all, in order, taught to go and come,
To prove obedient to their teacher's rule,
Speak when they're told, and, when they're not, be
dumb,—

This is the picture of a “RAGGED SCHOOL.”

Where *noble* hearts, and *honorable* minds,
The lowest depths of infant misery reach—
Where *beauty's* form its purest pleasure finds,
The long-neglected little ones to teach—
Where *kindness* ever works, and seldom fails,
(E'en though the child be stubborn as a mule)—
Where *patient love* o'er waywardness prevails—
There go, and ye shall find a “RAGGED SCHOOL.”

To curb the passions, and to mold the will;
To guide the wandering, and bring back the lost;
With Scripture truth the memory's stores to fill;
And seek the soul to save, at any cost:

To heal the youth that haunt our public ways,
Foul as the crowds that throng'd Bethesda's pool;—
This is the effort of our modern days—
This is the glory of the "RAGGED SCHOOL."

The band of laborers *now*, though scant and small,
To see *the first fruits*, with delight begin;
A time will come, when, in the sight of all,
The glorious *harvest* shall be gather'd in:
And thousands then, in heaven's unclouded calm,
Shall bow to Him who doth all nations rule,
Strike the sweet harp, and wave the victor's palm,
And bless the Saviour for the "RAGGED SCHOOL."

Christians of Britain, if ye love your land,
Your land of freedom, by the TRUTH made free,
Give of your substance, that each youthful band
That truth may learn, and God's salvation see;
Cleanse not the "*outside of the cup*"* alone;
Who does, is but a Pharisaic fool;—
But, that its inward brightness may be shown,
Pray for a blessing on the "RAGGED SCHOOL."

* Matthew xxiii, 25.

THE END.

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